



## Ending a training course

**Much attention has been paid to the nature of endings and their significance in our industry. However, there has been less consideration given to exploring the complexities of ending a counselling training programme, either in person or on-line.**

Both the tutors and students may experience similar feelings in the ending of training to the ending of a therapeutic relationship, as both are meaningful, collaborative and can be supportive and profoundly changing on both an emotional and spiritual level. In the classroom students are encouraged to be introspective and to learn about themselves, whilst simultaneously sharing this growth with their peers. This journey is so important and valuable, and ought to be honoured somehow in the final moments.

It is common for students to experience the ending of this journey as a loss and it is paramount that the tutor supports this. If done well it will provide a valuable learning experience.

Tutors and students alike can often avoid these endings with their plans to 'keep in touch', form study / reading groups etc.

Of course, there are a great many valid reasons for new relationships to form after the end of a course, but the group experience, just as night follows day will inevitably end, just as night follows day. The lack of planned endings may be due to several factors including time constraints, lack of awareness of useful techniques and pressure to complete assessments. However, perhaps the greatest difficulty is in saying good-bye.



## Ending your online counselling training course

Ending a counselling training course which has been delivered online can be particularly challenging. Relationships may feel distant and disconnected, and tutors and students alike have had to adapt to remote arrangements for completing assessments.

There will be emerging losses to consider relating to the experiences in virtual learning and to individual students' wider context.

The virtual classroom, however, presents some creative opportunities to acknowledge meaning of the end of the course for students at all levels. The benefits of marking the ending of a course can be summarised in some key areas which can provide valuable learning for all students:

- **An ending provides an emotional and psychological closure to the course and in doing so minimises uncertainty.**
- **An ending provides opportunities for both students and tutors to summarise the key ideas of the training.**
- **An ending adds context and dimension to the whole of the learning experience.**
- **An ending can stimulate further interest in the subject or related areas.**

An ending increases the connection between the tutors and students by recognizing the importance of taking time to say good-bye.

*“ Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten ”*

– B. F. Skinner



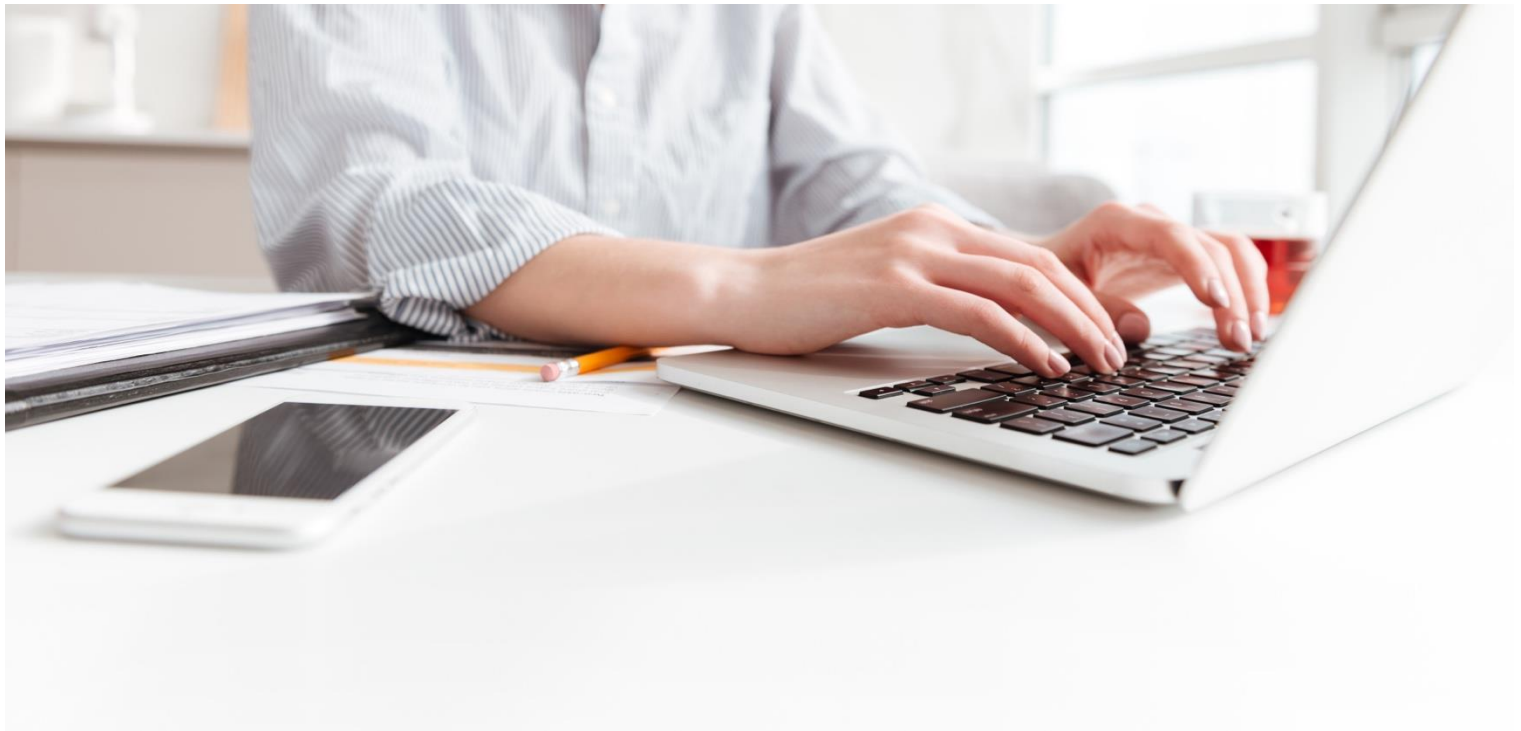
## Techniques used to mark emotional and psychological endings might include:

- A summary of the aims and outcomes of the course with acknowledgements of what the students have learned. This is like the summary chapter in a book.
- Meaningful quotes can be shared with students in personal or group emails or other mediums.
- Providing students with some memento from the course experience. Just as with a memorable trip, people enjoy having something to remember important events in their life. A course could be considered such an important trip. This might be feedback, a poem or quote or a creative object such as a stone or shell. Use of certificates of achievement or completion as mementos is often very appropriate, especially to acknowledge the extraordinary circumstances faced during this time. Certificates can include a quote for each student or recognition of a personal achievement. Other students can take part in making class certificates by having each student write a positive comment on each other's certificates.
- Students use creative materials to share meaning of their experiences in the group. These might include objects, pictures, poems etc.

- Students create a collage of images that represent their experiences. This can be done online or in person – in a live classroom, creative materials can be used and old magazines can be brought in to cut up. Online, students can copy and paste images onto a document.
- Students share a piece of music which represents their experiences on the course. One song each and have a class sing-along if the mood feels right.
- Students give each other feedback in a comments book which they can keep reflecting on after the course.
- Make direct links to the ending of a counselling relationship. Facilitate discussions which highlight the importance of working with loss and grief. Show how a students' capacity to process their own endings will help them work with clients in this way.
- Consider a final project or presentation which 'fits' with the ending of the course.
- Students write and share a postcard to themselves noting one piece of advice they would have given to themselves at the start of the course!
- Revisit the course aims and learning outcomes. Ask students to reflect in learning reviews, self-reviews what they have learned.
- Provide personalised individual feedback for every student.
- Ask students to write a 'letter to future student' explaining what can be gained from the course as well as broader advice on being a successful student.
- Students could undertake a project to create a brochure for future students. This might include information about the course content, requirements from students, finding a placement, counsellor, or supervisor.
- Finish with a round of applause for everyone involved and the feel-good feeling will last long after the end of the course!
- Ask students to leave testimonial reviews.

## Techniques used to mark fun endings might include:

- Create a 'Top 10' resources list with recommended reading / viewing.
- Use a note pad or whiteboard to ask students to answer the question 'how do you feel about counselling training now?' with a drawing. Discuss and extrapolate from the drawings the true feelings of the learners.
- Expect to receive some interesting and funny ones!
- Use a game format for a summative learning review. There are hundreds of on-line quizzes to adapt or make your own like 'The Chase.'
- A visit to a service project such as a counselling / helping agency or other venue which carries out work of interest.
- A class picnic where students bring a favourite comfort food.
- Ask students to create an "inspirational meme" using a quote from one of their journals and an accompanying image.
- Students could write a newspaper headline. What would it say about their experiences?
- A counselling award ceremony where everyone gets an Oscar for something voted on by their peers – and maybe some more creative ideas than "best listener" will come up.
- A vote of thanks. Set up an ending speech in which every student is thanked for their contributions to the group. This can be led by the tutor/s or students can take it in turns to thank one other student until everyone in the group has been thanked for something.
- Make your ending relevant to counselling training and the experiences during the course.



## Useful links

[Inside the therapeutic relationship - ending therapy video - CPCAB](#)

[BACP Ethical Framework | Breaks and endings`](#)

[Endings in Counselling • PDF guide for student counsellors \(counsellingtutor.com\)](#)

[Teaching Counselling Online: Ending a Counselling Training Course - YouTube](#)